

HONORING STEVE PALMER,
OWNER OF PALMER PLACE RESTAURANT ON WINNING THE RESTAURANT NEIGHBOR AWARD

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Steve Palmer, owner of Palmer Place Restaurant and winner of the National Restaurant Association Restaurant Neighbor Award.

The Restaurant Neighbor Award is a component of the Association's Cornerstone initiative, a comprehensive effort to advance and promote the restaurant industry's role as the cornerstone of community involvement, the cornerstone of career and employment opportunities and the cornerstone of economy.

This year's small business winner is Palmer Place. Creating a foundation sounds like a daunting task only achieved by huge corporations with lots of money to give away. But Small Business Winner Palmer Place Restaurant and its H Foundation is living proof that smaller restaurants can achieve big things in community outreach.

After a close friend and colleague died of cancer, Palmer Place owner Steve Palmer wanted to organize a fundraiser to raise money for cancer research. Palmer teamed up with local business owners John Rot and David Rizner to create the H Foundation where 100 percent of the money raised would go toward finding a cure for cancer.

The H Foundation aims to support innovative, forward-thinking cancer research. In 2003, the foundation donated \$170,000 to the Lurie center, from which researchers generated \$1.5 million in grants. Additionally part of the \$200,000 the H Foundation donated was used to create a program called Families After Cancer.

It is my honor to recognize Steve Palmer of Palmer Place Restaurant for his many achievements both within and outside of the business community, fostering the growth of a community as well as helping to create change and promote progress in cancer research.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS ARISING FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 2, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005 (H.R. 3645) and of the decision to call this special session to send resources to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama quickly.

The thoughts and prayers of all Americans go out to the citizens of the states and communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The

entire country has watched the images of the destruction caused by this natural disaster with shock and sadness. Those who have lost loved ones, their homes and their communities must receive immediate aid and the legislation we are passing today will start that process.

As we respond to the immediate needs of the families displaced by this tragic natural disaster, the citizens of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama also have my commitment that I will work with you to rebuild New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast. The impacts of this disaster on families, communities, the economy, and the environment will be long lasting. It will take resolve and commitment to ensure that we complete this enormous task.

The American spirit and the generosity of our citizens will be there for the victims of this tragedy. The first responder in this effort, however, must be the federal government—both for immediate needs and for long term rebuilding. Today is a critical first step in that effort and I am pleased to support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO ARMY SPECIALIST TOCCARA RENEE GREEN

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Army Specialist Toccara Renee Green.

Toccara Green served in the Army's 57th Transportation Company, 584th Corps Support Battalion, headquartered at Fort Drum, NY. A talented and dedicated soldier, Specialist Green began her commitment to the U.S. Armed Forces at an early age. While a student at Forest Park Senior High School, Specialist Green spent four years in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, where she was promoted to executive officer.

After her first year at Norfolk State University, Specialist Green decided to expedite her dream of serving in the Armed forces and enlisted in the Army. She served for nine months in Kuwait before beginning her first tour of Iraq as a motor and transport operator. Specialist Green was four months from completion of her second tour of Iraq when she was killed by a roadside bomb that detonated near her convoy in Al Asad on August 14, 2005.

Through her honor and service, Specialist Green dedicated her life to fighting for liberty so that others might taste the freedom that democracy brings. It is these ideals that America most cherishes, and that Specialist Green herself advanced.

Specialist Green's determination, enthusiasm, and ability to inspire others will be remembered by all who were privileged to know her. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Specialist Green and the incredible sacrifice she made for her country.

SECOND KATRINA SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the bills today to be taken up under sus-

pension of the rules. However, I strongly oppose taking up H.R. 3673, the Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, which includes \$51.8 billion for the relief effort, including \$50 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), under suspension. Doing so limits the opportunity for debate and amendments at a time when many legitimate questions are being raised about FEMA. We surely can spend some time debating these issues and offering amendments to make sure that FEMA spends this money properly.

Based on the performance so far, I have no confidence that either FEMA, or its director, Mr. Michael Brown, can manage the funds Congress is appropriating. Mr. Brown had no experience in disaster management prior to being appointed director of FEMA, and that lack of experience has shown all too clearly. Mr. Brown waited for hours after Hurricane Katrina hit the United States to issue a department-wide call for help from the Department of Homeland Security. According to Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard, FEMA also prevented the Coast Guard from providing fuel to local emergency personnel and turned back trucks filled with drinking water for victims. Neither FEMA nor any other federal agency appeared to be in charge as lawlessness broke out in New Orleans. Three days later, on Thursday, September 1, Director Brown said that federal officials had just learned that people had taken refuge in the New Orleans Convention Center. This was despite numerous previous news reports showing Americans gathering there. These are just a few examples of the delayed and badly conceived response to this disaster.

Many of these problems stem from the incompetence of FEMA management or perhaps its position in the enormous Department of Homeland Security, which is the amalgamation of 22 federal agencies. FEMA is no longer a cabinet-level agency, reporting directly to the President, as it was under President Clinton. People have raised questions whether this change, and FEMA's move into the Department of Homeland Security with a focus on dealing with terrorist events, have made it less able to help Americans deal with and recover from natural disasters. With the situation ongoing and FEMA to be heavily involved for months to come as the Gulf region recovers, we need to get the answers to these questions now. We cannot do that when the majority shuts off debate and prevents amendments.

Furthermore, I am concerned about providing FEMA more money, \$50 billion, at a time when many Americans, including myself, have lost confidence in its ability to manage this crisis. How can we have faith that this money will not be wasted, based on FEMA's performance to date? Particularly now, with a budget deficit of over \$300 billion, we cannot afford to waste any of our resources. In this time of need, we must come together as Americans and spend whatever is necessary to help our citizens rebuild. But, quickly appropriating money without accountability will not solve the problems of the Gulf region, if that money is not going to be well-spent. Instead of ramming this money through without discussion, we should be talking about how we can ensure FEMA uses this money in the best way

possible to help the citizens affected by Hurricane Katrina without unnecessarily blowing an even bigger hole in the budget deficit.

INTRODUCING A BILL ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL INDEPENDENT INQUIRY COMMISSION ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation establishing a National Independent Inquiry Commission on Disaster Preparedness and Response (NIICDPR) to examine and evaluate the Federal Government's response to Hurricane Katrina and assess our ability to respond to future large-scale disasters.

While the long-term impact of Hurricane Katrina will be felt for years, our evaluation of the Federal Government's response to, and preparation for, this and other major disasters—natural and man-made—must begin immediately.

Mirrored after the 9–11 Commission, the NIICDPR will consist of 10 members with no more than 5 being from either the Republican or Democratic parties, thus ensuring an independent and diverse make-up of commission members. The NIICDPR will be afforded the same powers which the 9–11 Commission enjoyed and will be tasked at finding the answers to the critical questions that we all have. These include but are not limited to:

Were we adequately prepared to respond to a disaster of this magnitude? Are we any more prepared today than we were before Katrina?

What plans were in place before Katrina made landfall to meet power, utility, and telecommunications needs following the storm? What plans are in place for future disasters?

What was the availability of adequate resources to meet the needs of displaced individuals and families, including temporary housing, medical services and facilities, transportation, and food and water supplies?

Did our federal disaster response plans consider the needs of all communities? What plans existed to ensure that underserved communities reached safety before and after Katrina?

How effective was the Federal Government in its rescue and other life-saving techniques?

Was the federal response to Hurricane Katrina efficiently coordinated with State and local governments? Was it adequate and appropriate in size and scope?

What improvements do the Executive and Legislative Branches need to make to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our disaster response programs?

Mr. Speaker, my Congressional District received the brunt of three major hurricanes last year. As I said earlier today, certainly our first priority has to be to rescue those who are still alive and provide them with housing, medical attention, food, and water. However, as the Gulf Coast turns to the recovery and rebuilding processes, the billions that Congress will spend will not be enough to fix the problems that exist within FEMA.

Based on my own personal experience dealing with FEMA and its director over the last year, I warn the Members of this body that the problems you see today are just the tip of the iceberg—and it has nothing to do with the magnitude of the disaster.

Inconsistency in FEMA regulations, constant reinterpretations of the Stafford Act, federal officials treating local emergency operations centers like revolving doors, lack of coordination, and FEMA's fluid and unclear chain of command are just a few of the many significant and real problems that Floridians dealt with last year and are still dealing with today.

I have literally begged the committees of jurisdiction in this body to hold hearings on these shortcomings. I even introduced bipartisan legislation in March with our colleague, CLAY SHAW, to address a slew of institutional problems within FEMA that we experienced first-hand last year.

Yet every time we take our concerns to the committees, we're told, "It's not a big enough problem to consider on its own." Well, Mr. Speaker, is the problem big enough now? How many people must die in a disaster before something becomes a "big enough problem" in this Congress?

Accountability is the only way to restore integrity in a broken system. An independent commission is the first step in repairing our disaster response system, which we all now know is woefully inadequate.

I ask for my colleagues support for this legislation, and I urge the House Leadership to bring it swiftly before the House for its consideration.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF NATION TO VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on perhaps the worst natural catastrophe to occur in America in my lifetime. Hurricane Katrina wreaked devastation beyond any we've seen and we will feel its wrath for years to come. As a Nation, we will continue to grapple with the destruction and the task of rebuilding.

In the days and weeks to come, we will keep the survivors and victims in our thoughts and prayers while we begin the arduous process of surveying the damage. As of yet, we still do not know how many lost their lives during the onslaught of the storm or in the aftermath. The early estimates place the lives lost in the thousands, and the coming days may push that tally higher.

We will also pray for the survivors many of whom have been evacuated to the surrounding states. I am proud that San Antonio, my hometown, is opening its doors for thousands of Americans who have nowhere else to go. In some ways, this is America's finest hour as strangers have opened their homes and communities to people who departed from New Orleans on buses or planes often with just the clothes on their backs.

Of course, we cannot praise enough the brave men and women of the Gulf region's police departments, rescue teams, the National

Guard, and the Armed Services. Time and again, they risked their lives to rescue the thousands of stranded people in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. When their Nation called, they answered. This week, we will fill the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD recounting their bravery and selflessness in the face of horrors and danger rarely seen in this country. They did better than could be expected with the resources and supplies they had.

Inexcusably, the administration failed both these heroes and those in need of aid. In the days after the hurricane had passed, the slow and inadequate response created another crisis that compounded the initial damage. Who was not angered and frustrated as the images from New Orleans washed over us like the floodwaters that engulfed the city after the levees were breached? How is it possible that we could not transport food, water, and medicine to the thousands trapped in the city? How could the conditions in the Superdome and the Convention center grow so dire?

We could assemble one of the world's most formidable military forces to invade Iraq which is halfway across the globe, yet we could not transport the essentials to a major American city. This simply boggles the mind and moves the conscience to anger and shame. Because the various governmental agencies lacked direction, thousands may have died days after the storm subsided. Will the administration continue to blame the State and local governments for being unable to coordinate a relief effort too big for any one entity save the Federal government? This is unacceptable, and clearly Congress will need to investigate and remedy the shameful shortcomings of the current Federal emergency management system.

Some of my colleagues say that the race and the poverty of the victims dictated the speed of the relief effort. Some would also condemn the fiscal priorities of an administration that has pursued reckless tax cuts during a time of war and while our national infrastructure literally crumbles. Early reports indicate the administration cut funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain the levee system in New Orleans. Yet, until all the facts are in, I urge my colleagues to reserve judgment, yet failing to fully investigate this calamity no matter how painful or embarrassing it may prove would breach our duty to the American people. We owe this to those the administration failed.

H.R. 3673, THE SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 3673, the Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Hurricane Katrina Response. This measure provides an additional \$51.8 billion for hurricane relief, with \$50 billion of that for relief and cleanup activities by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, \$1.4 billion for hurricane-related activities by the military, and \$400 million for the Army Corps of Engineers for restoration work on navigation locks and for channel dredging.